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Letter dated 4 May 1999 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward herewith an open letter from Nedeljko Sipovac, Federal Minister for Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to Ministers of Agriculture and to specialized governmental agencies in the field of agriculture concerning the effects of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the agriculture of the country.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex published as a document of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda item 94.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Open letter dated 30 April 1999 from the Federal Minister of Agriculture of Yugoslavia to the Ministers of Agriculture and to specialized governmental agencies in the field of agriculture

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has become one of the war test sites of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance, on which are, unfortunately, being measured all technological war accomplishments. This is confirmed by the fact that into this country have been launched 11,000 tons of the most destructive explosives, or on average more than a kilogram per citizen, which equates to the destructive power of about nine atomic bombs launched on Hiroshima.

On a densely inhabited continent such as Europe, where the ecological balance is rather sensitive, one of the basic world postulates, the postulate of ecological rights, proclaimed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, has been annulled. The damage is being caused to the objects of the country whose area the United Nations has proclaimed as a unique ecologically protected territory. Through planned bombing every day, NATO has caused an ecological catastrophe, not only in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but in the territories of all Balkan, Danube basin, Mediterranean and European countries as well.

Ecological damage in previous wars has rarely been registered, and has usually been neglected. We do not want to place ecological damage on the list on which human victims and material damage are, but we are positive that the ecological catastrophe caused by NATO aggression to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia cannot be neglected anymore.

Yugoslavia represents an extremely rich source of natural, authentic genetic resources. For plenty of plants, it represents the centre of flora and ecological and genetic diversity. As the result of this catastrophe the whole plant and animal world is endangered, as well as rare and endemic species of the living world that survive in rather small areas. Such damage is irrecoverable and the losses are irreparable. Biological diversity is not the property of any State or nation in whose territory it is found, and no generation of humans has the exclusive right to enjoy it; such ecological losses affect the whole region and the whole world.

Every country that bases its development on agriculture, energetics and industry has in its territory stored smaller or larger quantities of materials that are aggressive to human health or environment, the damage to which can cause extremely dangerous consequences of wide range. Despite all of this, NATO is carrying out planned bombing of chemical plants intended for civil purposes, and the bombing of these is causing direct ecological catastrophe. By aiming at plants that produce artificial fertilizers, the complex increase of concentration of toxic materials such as ammonia, chlorine and phosgene has been ascertained, and it is well known that those were used as war gas during the First World War. The result of the release of those dangerous materials, especially heavy metals, was also "the black rain" that recently fell over Pancevo, and which very soon will be falling over Europe.

The increase in the measured level of radioactivity is the result of the use of bullets with impoverished uranium, and it causes the disastrous degradation of nature and seriously endangers the health of present and future generations of human beings. It also causes

extreme ecological endangerment of living nature and natural mechanisms for self-protection and self-regeneration.

Through explosive reactions, fires and the burning of great amounts of different materials and chemicals and through intensive actions of military airplanes, the millions of tons of oxygen that the living world needs, have been irretrievably spent.

The damage caused to the ozone layer will have strong consequences for human kind and the plant and animal world of the whole planet, since it is well known that damages do not occur only on the area of activity. A great number of the international regulations in this field have been brought by the very countries that are now breaking them.

Burning vast quantities of oil, gasoline, crude oil, asphalt, tires and other materials at high temperatures and the operational and explosive charges of missiles cause the release into the atmosphere of great amounts of toxic material (it is being estimated over 1 billion cubic metres). Especially dangerous is the vast quantity of sulfur dioxide released into atmosphere. Those products of incineration and disintegration interact among themselves to form even more dangerous compounds, which are becoming part of the process of circulation of materials and energy and thus can be found on the surface of the Earth and directly in the food chain, disturbing the balance of flora and fauna, which in turn favours the development of the plant and animal pests that are rapidly spreading themselves outside of the polluted areas. The pollution permanently endangers flora and fauna of river basins of the Black Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. This makes the consequences of the toxic effects huge and unpredictable.

Bombing vast areas of agricultural soil causes the degradation of the soil, destroying the surface layers, which results in the destruction of the pedoflora and pedofauna and lifting of the lower layers of soil (laterization of soil), which take thousands of years to naturally regenerate.

The chain reactions of ecological catastrophe on agriculture last for a long period of time, and only a small part of it can be repaired. Ecological damages in war are a question of international import, since ecological losses are of a global nature. Considering all this, we think that there is no necessity to prove further that the immediate cessation of NATO aggression on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is indispensable in order to stop further human, material, economic and ecological catastrophe.

(*Signed*) Nedeljko **Sipovac**
Federal Minister for Agriculture